FACTORS HINDERING RETENTION OF BASIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BORDER AREAS AS PERCEIVED BY EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

— — — — — — — — — — — —

Muhinat Bolanle Bello
Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Education
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study is descriptive survey research that investigated factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in border areas as expressed by education stakeholders (teachers and community members) in Katsina state of North-Western, Nigeria. Researchers- design questionnaire with psychometrics properties of content validity as well as 0.68 reliability index was administered to 234 respondents. Mean rating with 2.50 as accepted mean score value was adopted to answer the research questions raised in this study. The t-test was used to test the research hypotheses raised. The results revealed that lack of social amenities, lack of special package for teachers deployed to serve in the border areas, as well as the insecurity of the border areas among others constitute the major factors hindering retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State. Based on the finding, this study recommends the provision of social amenities, adequate welfare package, and adequate security to enhance the high rate of teachers' retention in the border areas. It further

recommends that teachers develop a sense of patriotism and professional ethics to face the challenges of their profession.

Introduction

Nigeria, with vast land (about 983,000 kilometres in diameter) shares common boundaries with four countries; Niger, Chad to the North, Cameroun to the east, and the Republic of Benin to the South- West. Its border lines are about 4,000 kilometers and the Northern part alone accounts for about 2,000 kilometers of that stretch (Gallagher, 1971). Border communities are towns close to the boundary between the two countries. It could have the feature of highly cosmopolitan towns or flashpoint for international conflicts as well as isolated extreme rural areas, lacking necessities of life (Wills, 2010). Border areas are characterised by various factors that negatively influence the delivery of quality education, such as Insecurity; Researches such as that of Folami and Karimu (2010) have shown that Nigerian border areas are so porous and have failed to curtail the influx of illegal aliens and the challenges faced by the law enforcement agencies at the borders.

Natural phenomena, Political inadequacies, and Government neglect are other factors responsible for the sorry state of the Nigerian borders. With over 55 border posts in the Northern part of the country, the Immigration Service that is responsible for the management of the movement of people in and out of the country has less than 300 officers deployed in the areas and about ten vehicles to do the peripheral patrolling. The only patrol boat available is at the moment broken down and out of use, while there are less than one hundred motorcycles available for their use (Oluwalana, 2011). There are no clear cut forms of demarcation between Nigeria and her neighbours and everybody wanders in and out of the Country in these areas as they wished without showing any concern for rules or laws governing international borders.

Nigerians in the Baki area of Borno state prefer to live in the Cameroonian end of the border because there are virtually no infrastructural facilities at their end. There are no light or health facilities in the Nigerian side, whereas the Cameroonians have adequate health facilities that serve not only Cameroonians but also their Nigerian neighbours who move in droves to benefit from these facilities (Wills, 2010). Singh and Rangnekar (2000) also highlighted the following as a feature of border communities in the North-Western part of Nigeria. A high rate of unemployment of educated and uneducated, poor economic situation, the poor state of social infrastructures, and problems of unmarked demarcation of the boundary among others. Typically, border areas are remote and relatively underdeveloped, as a result, many border communities and their schools are poor and disadvantaged, lacking basic infrastructural facilities such as water, roads, electricity, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) among others.

Education has become one of the most powerful weapons known for reducing inequality in modern societies. It is also used for laying the foundation for sustainable growth and development of any nation. Basic education, in particular, is the level of education that develops in the individual, the capacity to read, write, and calculate. In other words, it helps to eradicate illiteracy (Bruns, Mingat & Rakotamalala, 2003). Thus, basic education is the only level of education that is available everywhere in both the developed and the developing countries as well as in border, urban and rural areas (Akinbote, Oduolowu & Lawal, 2001). This explains why basic education is the largest sub-sector of any education system and offers the unique opportunity to contribute to the transformation of societies through the education of the young ones (United Nation Educational, Scientific Cultural Organisation 2001).

As funding of Education programmes continue to be undercut, the biggest victims of the educational system are those living in border areas. Also, the attitudes of the children and teachers in the border area affect the quality of the schools. The overall enrollment into basic schools is very low, as about fifty percent of children living in these areas leave school before completion of the first primary cycle (Giroux, 1992). These children leave school for a variety of

reasons: some leave because of lack of interest; most leave so that they can work in the fields, etc. As these children grow into adults, many are still illiterate by the age of forty. These uneducated adults are usually reluctant to send their children to school because they fail in education. This, in turn, creates a problem for the school going next generation.

The reason the children living in border areas are being deprived of quality education could be attributed to the teachers. A large number of teachers refuse to teach in border areas and those that do are usually under-qualified (Bob, 2007). Also, teachers' deployment and retention have constituted a serious challenge to schools in the border areas. Several types of research have been conducted to identify the problem of education in the border area. Bob (2007), Aina (2010), and Folami and Karimu (2010) using different variables such as geographical locations and sample scope. This study investigated the factors hindering retention of basic school teachers in border areas as perceived by educational stakeholders in Katsina State, Nigeria

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State as perceived by educational stakeholders (Teachers and community members). Specifically, the study would examine:

i. Factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State, Nigeria as perceived by the teachers and community members.

ii. Possible solutions to the factors hindering retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State, Nigeria as perceived by the teachers and community members.

Research Questions

The following research questions were put forward to guide this study:

iii. What are the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State, Nigeria as perceived by the teachers and community members?

iv.   What is the possible solution to the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina state as perceived by the teachers and community members?

Hypotheses

Ho1 There is no significant difference in the teacher's and community members' perception of the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State, Nigeria.

Ho2 There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and community members on how to enhance the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State, Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used in this study. The choice of the descriptive survey was in line with Daramola (2006), who maintained that it is concerned with the gathering of information on peoples' opinions. The target population for this study comprised the teachers and border community members of Bugaje, Farfaru, Gangara, Gulbin Baure, and Jibiya Kusa of Jiba in Katsina State. Twelve thousand six hundred and fifty-seven 12,657 people are living in these four border communities of Jiba Local Government Areas of Katsina State out of which 235 respondents (consisting of both teachers and community members) were purposively sampled (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This is in line with Research Advisors' (2006) table for selecting the sample size. A 19-item Five Point-Likert scale type questionnaire designed by the researchers was used for eliciting the needed data from the respondents. The questionnaire was also translated into two other languages (Hausa and Arabic). The questionnaire items were validated by experts in the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, and in the department of Languages for Hausa and Arabic to ensure its content validity. This is in line with Sambo (2008) who maintained that the best procedure for validating a research instrument is to give it to a panel of experts. A

test re-test reliability method was carried out with a sample of 40 respondents (teachers and border community members) in Illela Local government of Sokoto State. A three-week interval period was given. The scores of the first were correlated with the scores of the second using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and a reliability index of 0.68 was obtained. The questionnaire contained two sections. Bio-data of the respondents constituted the first section while the second section contained 19-items with 4 points responses (Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researchers in the company of trained research assistants. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation with 2.50 as accepted means score value.

Results
The results were presented in the tables below:

Research Question One: What are the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State, Nigeria as perceived by the teachers and community members?

Table 1: Mean Score Table on Challenges

S/No	StatementsChallenges	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Poor infrastructural facilities in border school	3.31	1.06	Agreed
2	Lack of teachers' use of teaching facilities in border schools.	3.55	0.96	Agreed
3	Poor monitoring of teachers in the border schools.	3.84	1.05	Agreed
4	Lack of special allowance to Teachers posted to border area schools	3.18	0.93	Agreed
5	Lack of access to professional training to develop basic school teachers.	3.71	1.10	Agreed
6	Insecurity nature of border areas.	3.50	1.01	Agreed
7	Outright neglect of teachers posted to the border schools.	3.74	1.13	Agreed
8	Marital status of basic school teachers that influence their retention in border schools.	3.53	1.04	Agreed
9	Poor accommodation for basic teachers deployed to border schools.	3.50	1.00	Agreed
10	Poor school environment at the border areas	3.10	1.01	Agreed
11	unconducive teaching and learning environment to the border areas	3.61	1.04	Agreed

Table 1 reveals some factors hindering retention of basic school teachers in the border schools, this was unanimously agreed that the factors listed above influence teachers' retention in border schools. With the mean score values ranging from 3.10 to 3.84 which is above the acceptable value of 2.50.

Research Question Two: What are the possible solution to the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina state as perceived by the teachers and community members?

Table 2: mean score table of prospects

S/No	Prospects	Mean	Std.D	Decision
1	The involvement of border school teachers in communities' work may help to retain more teachers into the community.	3.44	1.03	Agreed
2	Inclusion of border education as a course of study in the Nigerian teacher training institutes would help to prepare pre-service teachers for the task of teaching in the border areas.	3.58	0.95	Agreed
3	The allocation of more funds for education at the border Local Government Areas would influence retention among teachers positively.	3.83	1.05	Agreed
4	Adequate provision of in-service training for border teachers would promote a high retention rate among border teachers.	3.30	0.99	Agreed
5	Adequate provision of social infrastructural facilities in the border communities would promote high retention rate among basic school teachers	3.81	1.07	Agreed
6	Adequate provision of security at the border areas.	3.55	1.00	Agreed
7	Inspection and supervision services should be adequate at the border schools	3.56	1.02	Agreed

Table 2 revealed some possible solutions to the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State as perceived by both the teachers and the community members. With the mean score values ranging from 3.30 to 3.83 which is above the acceptable value of 2.50.

Hypotheses one: There is no significant difference in the teacher's and community members' perceptions of the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State

Table 2:   t-test Table of Teachers and Community Members' Responses

Status	N	MEAN	SD	df	t-test	Sig(2-tail)	Decision
Teachers	12	38.5	3.74	232	0.56	0.58	Accepted
Community members	223	77.30	590.05				

P= 0.05

Table 3 reveals that the t-value is 0.56 with a significant probability value (P-value) of 0.58. Since the probability value, P-value = 0.58 > 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This implies that no significant difference existed in the perception of teachers and community members as regards the factors hindering the retention of basic school teachers in the border areas of Katsina State.

Hypotheses two: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and community members on how best to enhance the retention of basic school   teachers in the border areas of Katsina State.

Table 4:   t-test Table of Teachers and Community members' responses

Status	N	MEAN	Std.D	df	t-test	Sig(2-tail)	Decision
Teachers	12	28.25	2.89	232	-0.74	0.46	Accepted
Community members	223	28.91	3.05				

P= 0.05

Table 4: reveals that the t-value is -0.76 with a significant probability value (P-value) of 0.46. Since the probability value, P-value = 0.0.46> 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This implies that both teachers and community members do not differ in the way they perceived the possible solution that has been

able to promote the retention of basic education teachers in the border areas of Katsina state.

Discussion

The findings in this study revealed that both the teachers and community members perceived that there are factors such as; lack of access to professional opportunities where the teachers can develop their professional skills such as seminars,/workshops, or training, and re-re-training programmes. Other factors include; low teachers' salaries, lack of special allowance for teachers deployed to serve in the border areas, lack of social infrastructure in the environment. Also, the challenge of insecurity in the border areas is an added problem. Thus, Basic schools in the border areas lack basic social facilities and infrastructures such as electricity, drinkable water, functional laboratories, good usable toilets, among others. Also, the schools lacked adequate supervision and inspection from the States Ministry of Education.

The findings of this study have also revealed that low retention rates of basic school teachers in the border areas have negative implications for quality education. The quality of teachers out due to poor educational facilities and materials influence school enrollment, attendance, completion, and achievement rates among school-age children in border areas. This is because border school teachers carry out their duties in a difficult environment combined with inadequate financial and material support from the government, inadequate supervision, and poor remuneration. All these demoralized even the dedicated teachers. This is why many of these teachers do redeploy themselves back to the urban areas, leaving the border areas with very few workforces.

Among the strategies that may help border schools retain teachers as perceived by both teachers and community members are to involve the teacher in the community activities. Also, increasing people's awareness of the problems of border schools may be promising. This will help them develop an interest in border schools and may contribute to the development of these schools.

Recent statistics from the Ministry of Education, National Teachers' Institute (NTI), National Commission for Colleges of

Education (NCCE) and Faculties of Education in Nigerian Universities revealed that adequate numbers of trained teachers are being produced on a yearly bases but the problem lies in teacher distribution or deployment. Adequate funds are also considered necessary to take care of teachers teaching in border areas. This would afford the Local government the opportunities of allocating special allowances for the teachers teaching in the schools in border areas and also to make adequate provision for the necessary teaching and learning materials and all other necessary facilities in the school. Training and re-training of teachers should on the priority list of the government, especially for teachers in the border areas. This would enhance productivity and retention among them.

Adequate security provision is needed to promote a high retention rate among teachers in border schools. This is because there cannot be developed in any society when her citizens are living in fear. This may be one of the reasons Stuart (2009) pointed out that the primary responsibilities of any leader in a state or nation are to preserve the security of the people occupying its territory. Accordingly, policies should be focused on protecting homeland, rural / border security, freeing people from fear, and pushing forward with development.

These present findings corroborated those of studies of Oghenekohwo, Adekola, and Iyunade (2007), Mark, Benwari, and Abraham (2009), Lewin (1993), Alexandra (2008) and Abrego and Rodriguez (2006) are all agreed with the present study. These scholars maintain that there are shortages of teachers, educational materials, facilities as well as infrastructures. The challenges existing in the studied border communities negated those of Singh and Rangnekar (2000), Huebler and Loaiza (2002), and Udo and Chuks (n.d). In their studies, they affirmed that border communities lack the formal school system.

Conclusion

Rethinking basic schools in the border areas requires first reviewing the characteristics of the border areas, particularly in developing countries, like Nigeria, and then considering the place of education in the policy and programme of the Nation. To a large extent, Katsina

State's international border communities have been suffering from low or poor retention rate of basic school teachers. This has put its population at disadvantaged educationally. As low teacher retention in the schools creates many obstacles for basic school students in border schools, another setback is the lack of school facilities which becomes detrimental to the learning process.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

a. There should be compensated with additional financial incentives, in the form of hardship allowance, travel allowance for teachers to go to the border area, etc. Some measures must be put in place to help mitigate the problems teachers in border communities are facing in Nigeria generally to be able to retain them there.

b. The government of the day must give special attention needs to be a focus on border areas, to alleviate the suffering of the populace and plan the education system to be more inclusive.

References

Aina, F. (2010). Addressing the development challenges of border communities. DailyTrust newspaper. Retrieved from: www.sunda.dailytrust.com/index.php?development.border

Akinbote, R.O., Oduolowu, E.A. & Lawal, B.O. (2001). Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Nigeria. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.

Bruns, B. Mingart, A. & Rakotomalala R. (2003). Achieving universal primary education by 2015: A Chance for Every Child. Washington, D. C. The World Bank.

Castle, K. (1995). Border teachers. Sydney, Australia: St. Louis Press.

Daramola, S.O. (2006). Research methods and statistical analysis in education. Ado-Ekiti: PETORA Educational publisher.

Folami, A. O. & Karimu, O. O. (2010). Climate change and cross border crime in Nigeria. Paper presented at the 250th Anniversary Conference Organized for the Royal Norwegian

Society of Sciences and Letter on Climate Change and Security in Trondheim, Norway.

Gallagher, J.J. (1971). History of Nigeria. Journal of Educational Thought, 27 (3), 273-300.

Giroux, H. (1992). Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education. New York: Routledge.

National Bureau of Statistics, (2009). Social statistics in Nigeria. Retrieved from: www.national-bureau-of-stat/htm

Oluwalana, S. (2011). Nigeria's porous borders entry point for illegal aliens. News desk. Retrieved from: www.mirro-new-desk/htm-

Sambo, A. A. (2008). Research methods in education. Edo: Stirling-Horden Publishers.

Singh, K. & Rangnekar, U.S. (2000). A profile report on a pre-project survey of border area development programmes in developing countries. Retrieved from: www.pbplanning.gov.in/pdf/Annexure-VI.pdf.

Teachers and community stakeholders' perspectives about schools. Retrieved from:www.ernape.net/ejournal/index.php/IJPE/.../viewPDFInterstitial/... /14.

The Research Advisors(2006). Sample size table. Retrieved from: http://research-   advisors.com.

Ujo, A. A. (2000). Social research: a non- quantitative approach. Nigeria: Anyaotu Enterprise and publisher Ltd.

UNESCO: Education for All - Global Monitoring Report (2007). Reaching the Marginalized

Wills, N. (2010). School-based professional support by Border Community Development Agency. Retrieved from:www.voiceofnigeria.org/Bordersecub.htm